In this exercise, a tolal of 1250 cases of charges for tests, procedures etc. have been rationaiized. Charges for over 400 new tests and procedures have been introduced. In respect of another 400 tests, the charges have been increased due to increase in cost of consumables. In the case of over 380 cases, the charges have been left unaltered and in about 40 cases charges have been reduced.

Safe and timely movement of trains

†73. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the status of performance related to timely movement of trains since February, 2005;

(b) the reasons for late arrivals of trains and the persons held responsible therefor; and

(c) the measures taken by Government to improve the conditions of safe and timely movement of trains specially during foggy weather?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) The overall punctuality performance of Mail/ Express trains from February 2005 to January 2006 (month-wise) is as under:

	Broad Gauge(%)	Metre Gauge(%)
February, 05	90.5	96.7
March, 05	91.9	97.2
April, 05	91.1	98.2
May, 05	90.8	97.6
June, 05	92.0	96.2
July, 05	92.9	96.2
August, 05	93.0	96.9
September, 05	91.7	98.1
October, 05	92.5	97.8
November, 05	92.0	97.6
December, 05	88.4	97.7
January, 06	87.7	98.3

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

The reasons for late running of trains include not only those which are attributable to the Railways such as asset failures, extra time taken for loading and unloading parcels and poor traffic control but also those which are beyond the control of railways such as miscreant activities, natural calamities like cyclonic storms, damage to track due to breaches, Law and Order problems, bad weather, cattle run over and electricity grid failures.

Following steps are being taken by Indian Railways to improve? operations and the punctuality of passenger carrying trains:

1. Intensive, round the clock monitoring of trains at all three levels viz. Divisional, Zonal Head Quarters and Railway Board.
2. Improvements in Time tabling to provide a clear path.
3. Improvement in standard of maintenance of assets to reduce equipment failures.
4. Counseling and motivating staff to ensure punctual running.
5. Liaison with State Government to tackle the Law and Order problems and miscreant activities.
6. Up-gradation of technology of track, rolling stock and signaling.

As a result, constraints notwithstanding punctuality performance of various passenger services has been satisfactory. During the period, 2587 staff found responsible for unwarranted detention of trains were taken up.

The following steps/precautions are taken during foggy conditions:

(a) Speed limits are imposed depending on visibility;

(b) Shunting is avoided as far as possible;

(c) Whistling;

(d) Signal Sighting Boards are repainted before the onset of Winter Season.

(e) At Level Crossing Gates provided with gate signals, luminous signal sighting boards are provided.

(f) During the fog time, making across the track at the sighting board is made mandatory.

(g) Detonators are placed at specified intervals for all train movement to alert the driver of an approaching signal once to*g* is declared at a station. This is done by calling Railway stall on duty and rest for working as Fog Signalmen who place detonators whenever a train is expected. After the passage of each train detonator is replaced. The location of such detonators are before the stop signals so that drivers are warned of approaching signals. The process is repeated for the duration of the fog.

Gauge conversion of Jainagar-Darbhanga-Narkatiyagunj rail line

†74. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the stipulated time limit for completing the work of gauge conversion from existing narrow gauge to broad gauge from Jainagar to Darbhanga and to Narkatiyagunj; and

(b) the latest position of progress in the work of gauge conversion at the said railway division?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) On Jayanagar-Sitamarhi (136 km) section, earthwork and bridge works have been taken up. In Sitamarhi-Raxaul-Narkatiaganj section also earthwork has been taken up. Further, gauge conversion from Narkatiaganj to Bhiknathori (35.80 km.) has been approved as part of the project. The work would be progressed and completed in the coming years, as per availability of resources. As outlay of Rs. 20 cr. has been provided for the project in the Budget 2005-06.

Robberies/crimes in trains

75. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a spate of robberies/crimes have been committed in trains;

(b) if so, the details of such robberies/crimes during the last three years;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.